

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

TEXT: ACTS 2:42-47

Introduction:

1. The book of Acts picks up where the Gospels leave off. In the four Gospels, we see the Son of God exalting and revealing God the Father, and in the book of Acts we see the Spirit of God exalting and revealing the Son of God.
2. The Gospels tell what Christ did and taught directly and personally before His ascension into heaven. The book of Acts tells what Christ is doing now through the Holy Spirit and the church.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven directing the church, while the Holy Spirit is here with us carrying out the plans.
4. The book of Acts and the epistles present the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, interceding as our High Priest. First John 2:1 says the Lord Jesus Christ is our "Advocate with the Father."
5. In the book of Acts, we see that while the Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate in heaven, the Holy Spirit is our Advocate here on earth.
6. The same Greek word (*paraklētos*) translated "Advocate" in I John 2:1 is translated "Comforter" in John 14:6, 26; 15:26; and 16:7.
7. Our Lord said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."
8. *Strong's Concordance* says this word "Comforter" means that after our Lord's ascension, "the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles, to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions."
9. This is the great theme of the book of Acts (cf. Acts 1:1, 2).

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT ADDS TO THE CHURCH (2:47).

1. In Matthew 16:18, the Lord Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
2. And our Lord said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."
3. This means that today our Lord is building His church through the Holy Spirit. This is what He meant when He said to His disciples in Luke 24:49, right before He ascended into heaven, "And, behold, I

- send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
4. And then again, in Acts 1:4 when He "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father."
 5. "The promise of the Father" is the Holy Spirit. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
 6. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32, 33; cf. 2:38).
 7. In Galatians 3:14, the apostle Paul says "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."
 8. How did we receive the Lord Jesus Christ? By faith (John 3:16).
 9. How do we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit? By faith.
 10. J. Wilbur Chapman said, "We need expect no great outpouring of the Holy Ghost so long as His leadership is ignored, and without this high spiritual atmosphere we may expect, as individuals, no special victories."
 11. I like what Dr. Chapman said about our "individual" responsibilities. Many Christians are praying for revival, but first they need to get revived!
 12. And if enough individual church members get revived, surely the church will get revived (cf. Acts 4:31; 9:31).
 13. I should also mention that the Holy Spirit not only adds to the church, and multiplies churches, but sometimes He subtracts from the church (Acts 5:1-11).

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT ENLIGHTENS THE CHURCH (ACTS 10:44).

1. Our Lord said in John 14:26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things..."
2. When Christians "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine," the Holy Spirit is their teacher (Acts 2:42; cf. John 14:26).
3. I am not minimizing the importance of pastors and teachers. I have devoted my life to teaching and preaching the Word of God.

4. Ephesians 4:11 says God has given to the church evangelists, and pastors and teachers.
5. However, the only preachers and teachers that will do us any good are those that are filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 4:8; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24).
6. And in addition to getting taught from pastors and other teachers and preachers, we need to be taught directly by the Holy Spirit.
7. In Luke 12:12, the Lord said, "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." Now I understand that in the context of Luke 12:11, 12, our Lord was saying that the Holy Spirit would help them when they were brought before magistrates and powers, but this principle of being taught directly by the Holy Spirit is taught all throughout the New Testament (cf. I John 2:26, 27).
8. John 7:17 says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."
9. In fact, this principle is taught in the Old Testament as well. Nehemiah 9:20 says, "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them."
10. Job 32:8 says, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."
11. Psalm 143:10 says, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."
12. Proverbs 1:23 says, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."
13. In addition to teaching us, the Holy Spirit guides us. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).
14. We see this all throughout the book of Acts (cf. Acts 8:29, 39; 10:19; 11:12, 27-30; 15:28; 16:6-10; 20:22, 23; 21:4, 11).
15. The Holy Spirit enlightens the church, and teaches the church, and guides the church, and gives joy to the church (Acts 13:52).

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT GOVERNS THE CHURCH (ACTS 5:32).

1. When the Holy Spirit is acknowledged and Christians are sensitive to His leading, there will be unity in the church because the Holy Spirit unifies the church.
2. Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God," and He is grieved when there is discord and backbiting and carnality, etc.

3. Acts 2:46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart..."
4. We see this phrase, "with one accord," all throughout the book of Acts because the Holy Spirit brings unity.
5. The New Testament refers to the church as the body of Christ, and Ephesians 4:16 says, the whole body is "fitly joined together."
6. The Holy Spirit does that. To properly understand the work of the Holy Spirit, one must study John 14, 15, and 16.
7. In John 14:16, 17, our Lord said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."
8. The Holy Spirit indwells each and every child of God.
9. Furthermore, Jesus said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).
10. How wonderful! Our Lord said, "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).
11. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.
12. Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist said, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mark 1:8; cf. Acts 1:4, 5).
13. Peter referred to John's statement in Acts 11:16, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."
14. Peter was referring to the conversion of Cornelius and those in his house (recorded in Acts 10), so the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not just a one-time event on the Day of Pentecost.
15. Some preachers use the terms "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and "filled with the Holy Spirit" and "indwelt by the Holy Spirit" interchangeably, but there are important distinctions.
16. A person receives the Holy Spirit the moment he is saved. But being indwelt with the Holy Spirit is not the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13; Ephesians 5:18).
17. When we say the Holy Spirit governs the church, we also mean that it is the Holy Spirit who calls men to preach. It is the Holy Spirit who places men in the ministry (Acts 20:28).
18. It is the Holy Spirit who sends out missionaries (Acts 13:1-5).

19. The Holy Spirit equips the church with Spirit-filled workers (Acts 6:1-7).

CONCLUSION:

1. Let me conclude with an illustration from J. Wilbur Chapman.
2. "The Spirit is the breath of God in the body of His church. If His rule is not followed, it naturally results that His life is shut out. Thus it comes to be like a man suffering from pneumonia -- one unaccustomed to such scenes declares that what the man needs is more air, but in point of fact it is not more air he needs at all, but more lung to be filled with air. We do not want more of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost ought to have more of the church" (*The Lost Crown*).
3. If you are saved, then you have the Holy Spirit, but does He have you?

And if you are not saved, you need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for your sins, and He will save you if you ask Him.